

A Stockdale Family Tree

It is difficult to research the village of Cark without encountering a James Stockdale – father, son or grandson. They were dominant personalities in the village for around 120 years. James I as the merchant and industrialist, James II who, after early years working with Lancaster and Liverpool merchants, managed his father's Cark interests whilst James III lived off the estate and wrote his well-known *Annales Caermoelenses* or *Annals of Cartmel*.

In various Stockdale estate papers other names appear: Benning, Boulton, Harrison, Kirkes and Ross. Who were these people? In *Annals*, James III makes many claims for his ancestry and the descendents of his grandfather. Whilst some seems to make sense other parts, like other claims in the book, seem questionable. In order to unravel the Stockdale family, I drew up this family tree.

The immediate family of James I were reasonably straightforward to confirm. The Lancashire Online Parish Clerk website has transcripts of Cartmel Priory baptisms marriages and burials until the 1870s together with similar transcripts for other (old county of) Lancashire church records for varying periods. What has proved difficult is when a christening, marriage or funeral occurred outside the county, or indeed in dissenting chapels. Thus I have not been able to properly establish James III's claim that he was descended from the Stockdale's of Knaresborough or that his father was born at Birkland Barrow Hall at Over Kellet. In fact I have been unable to find James I's baptism record.

Stockdale is a common name in the Lune valley and nearby, in Bolton le Sands and up the Lune to Kirkby Lonsdale and Casterton, where a branch of the family had a small estate and tried to claim a pedigree around 1600, only to have it rejected in 1615. Perhaps a family trait? However, that aspect must remain a work in progress.

Similarly the link to the Knaresborough family. James III makes great play on the family investing heavily and losing their fortune in the South Sea Bubble scandal. As can be seen, that did occur, but fortune was lost around 20 years after the birth of James I. Again more work is needed to see if there was a connection.

With the heirs of James I, it is surprising what can be found. Thus as can be seen, the twice married Elizabeth Stockdale became matriarch to the Kirkes and the Boulton's. With the Kirkes dynasty, of which it appears descendents still live, we get the noted Victorian Physiologist, William Senhouse Kirkes, whose discoveries have recently been re-evaluated to his credit. When her first husband, Liverpool merchant Morecroft Kirkes died, she remarried William Wilkinson, brother of the great Ironmaster, John. Her daughter married Matthew Robinson Boulton, son of the Matthew Boulton, partner of Watt, manufacturer and sometime joint investor with James I in schemes led by John Wilkinson.

James I's daughter Ellen married Ulverston surgeon William Harrison. A memorial to them is on the wall of the Piper Choir in Cartmel Priory. It is three of her children who would inherit a share of James I's estate on his death in 1807. James Harrison had part and his cousin Henry Benning another portion. James Harrison appears to

have been unmarried and appears to have left his Cark interests to his nephew, Rev. Dr Henry Ross of Mauritius and Lancaster.

James Stockdale III can be seen to be accurate where people would be aware of his cousins, but work is still needed to prove his ancestry. However, enough is here to answer many questions about the Cark family.

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